

Anne Babson

BIENVENUE AU BUNKER

"You want the...least problematic shelter, and that is why...if you are interested in learning more about the underground bunkers... see this page."—Web copy from Rising S Company – We don't sell fear. We sell preparedness.

"We have come to console you in your anguish and perplexity, dear friend, and explain the things that trouble your soul and confuse your thoughts."-- Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, Ineke Hardy, Tr.

My library, a block of volumes stonewalling
Me inside my head, form my true calling.
I endure endless war and sometime plague
Here, sipping philosophers' ideas too vague
To really poison me, unlike unboiled water,
Which I avoid. On oceans of *bons mots*, otter-
Like, I float above swells, cracking nuts, taking notes.
I hear distant guns fire, or are those anecdotes

Tweeting through seams in my palatial barricade
Here where I hole myself up from fusillades?
It's too perilous to stray beyond the bookshelves.
Others pound the ark in the rain. We save ourselves.
Here, prefect bound perfectly, the dead resurrect,
Speak volumes, tell me to gather *pensées*, erect

A city safe for women built on heroic
Couplets. Clearly this makes much more sense than epics
Unfolding outside this bespoke, book-lined bunker.
Unabashed Kardashians roam while I hunker

Here! I judge films by cannisters, books by covers.
Each cell, each page I scan promises new lovers.
Derrida tells me *Il n'y a pas de hors texte*,
But I bury myself here to avoid what comes next.

JANUARY BUNKER

History so illuminates that
I don't need a flashlight down here, just this
Old-world glow. The Duc de Berry paid for
Art instead of war, a bright book of hours.
It gold-leafed the seasons. Peasant women
Gave sly looks as they curved down like their sheaves.
The Burgundy of the book, its bounties
Resplendent, masked knights turned to land pirates
After the king got kidnapped and would not
Return even when rescued. Other books
By clergy recommended ways to rape.
Plague ate enemies. The duke stayed home and read.
Behold this book of hours on white vellum.
Outside, chaos agents abound, and yet --

FEBRUARY BUNKER

Nothing grows in this season but yearning,
But instead of frost or brown patches,
I painted a dyptich of daffodils.
On one panel, I sit as I do here now,
Only in a field where a hart eats them.
On the other, I kneel before David,
Patron saint of Wales, who holds a pigeon.
I shoo away birds with yellow bouquets.
I'm a protestant. I don't revere him.
Someone pounded on the door this morning.
Then I heard a distant scream.
Yellow flowers can so cheer up a room.

MARCH BUNKER

A hound at my feet,
I type these lyrics.
He eats the roaches.
I keep him for this.

Out there – the thunder.
The dog barks. He leans
On my legs. I type.
He hates the crashing.

In here, I draft.
I wonder just who
Will ever hear
what I write while

The thick layers of
Insulation
Seal us both in.
I draft, redraft.

DECEMBER BUNKER

One Christmas I roasted chestnuts in the
Fireplace with my wonderful husband Mark.
Only, I didn't have a fireplace. Mark
Divorced me. Chestnuts taste like wet cardboard.
But there I was roasting them, and my Mark
Was out caressing creases in crotches
While I shuffled the Nat King Cole carols
And watched the white flames making spirits bright.
Although It's been said many times, many
Times as an interrogation alibi,
In this tin hut, have yourself a merry
Little whatever you need next, darling.
Have yourself a merry contrarian.
This bunker is sound proof. What do you need?